



First Things First

Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board

Executive Director Report January 16, 2009

1) Evaluation

In order to provide baseline data for First Things First key measures, two surveys have been conducted: the Family and Community Survey and the Partner Survey. (See comprehensive report on surveys by Dr. Kemp in attached report for the Board meeting.)

Background

The First Things First Family and Community survey was a telephone survey of about 5,200 respondents, the majority of whom were parents of children under six residing throughout the State of Arizona. Their responses provide insight into parents' knowledge of early childhood, their behavior related to child development, their perception of the coordination of the early childhood system, and their support for early childhood as a movement.

The First Things First Partner Survey was an online survey sent to 301 early childhood stakeholders of whom, 145 responded. Their responses provide insight into the current state of services and information related to early childhood in Arizona, baseline measures of coordination, and areas for additional early childhood collaboration.

Findings

Families of young children generally understand the importance of early childhood for optimal development. However, there is divergence of opinion on optimal parent behavior related to children's language development, discipline, and behavioral expectations.

Early childhood partners and parents both note that coordination and collaboration in early childhood needs improvement. Areas for special concentration are: access to information and services.

Next Steps

Additional analyses of the Family and community survey will offer insight into parent responses related to their literacy practice as well as their support for early childhood as a movement. Further, responses will be analyzed by respondent background (ethnicity, income, geographic

region). Initial analysis suggests that responses to survey questions vary by the background of the parent.

External Evaluation Proposal

The FTF External Evaluation proposal was approved by the Board on 12/2/08. FTF staff has developed a contract which will be reviewed by University personnel as well as the Attorney General's Office. The proposed start of the University Consortium's work is 1/1/09.

External Agency Data Collaboration

Meetings to discuss data collection or data sharing were convened with the Arizona Department of Economic Security and the Morrison Institute. FTF is working towards formal data sharing agreements and collaboration with these Agencies.

Detail on External Partners

Evaluation is currently working with our external partners and have met with the following groups on the strategies listed below:

- 12/17 Web design of Family and Children as well as FTF content with the Morrison Institute AZ Indicators project
- 12/17; 1/8 Attendance at the Epidemiology Workgroup to analyze and publish data delivered every 2 years from all state agencies
- 12/29 Discussion of NACCRRRAW are data sharing and participation in a national pilot study for data integration and transfer with NACCRRRA and DES
- 1/5 Discussion of the United Way's interest in using the EDI assessment of kindergarten readiness with pilot study members at the University of CA
- 1/7 P20/College and Career-Ready Policy Institute working group on performance goals and measures for college and career readiness

2) Policy and Research

See Policy Update Report by Sandy Foreman.

3) Regional Administration

See Regional Administration Update by Michelle Katona.

4) Finance (Grants Management)

Statewide Grants

Quality First! (QIRS)

The Finance and Policy Teams developed the Quality First RFGAs for Coaching & Incentives, announced/posted the Quality First RFGA(s) as well as reviewed and finalized committee recommendations of the QIRS Application process.

The awards for Quality First Assessment & Coaching elements after Board Approval are finalized and a meeting is scheduled for December 16, 2008 with the Quality First! grant recipients to provide financial overview of what will be required for Financial compliance.

Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC)

Finance is in the development phase of establishing a procurement mechanism to provide funding for the Child Care Health Consultation (CHCC) program based on the requirements provided by the Policy Division and intend to provide additional assistance and support to the program staff as needed.

Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H)

By October 30, 2008 Finance established a procurement mechanism (sole source, impractical to compete, or bid waiver) in coordination with the Administration Services Division and the Policy Division to provide funding for the identified administrative home for the TEACH Arizona Program and submitted to Policy for final approval. Administration Services submitted for approval to the State Procurement Office. State Procurement was approved **November 17, 2008**.

Statewide –Competitive Grant Program

Finance completed the scope of work and RFGA template for the statewide competitive grant opportunities and worked with Policy to announce/post the Statewide Competitive RFGA.

Currently reviewing and finalizing review committee recommendations of the Statewide Competitive process and finalizing awards for the statewide competitive process for Board approval.

Working with the Policy Team to review and finalize review committee recommendations of the statewide competitive process as well as finalizing awards for the statewide competitive process for Board approval.

External Evaluation Grant Agreement

Currently working to finalize the scope of work and Grant Agreement template for the agreement.

Regional Grants

The Finance Division is currently coordinating with the Regions Division to deliver outreach and training on the grants process and success will be measured by a satisfaction survey administered to training participants.

Attorney General Meetings

FTF Finance staff members met with the Attorney General's Office on August 5, 2008 and will continue to have on-going meetings with the AG's Office to discuss finance division issues as well regional council operational issues. General areas that will be covered in the following meetings with the AG's Office include:

- Tribal Law update and information review on grant agreement options vs. formal Inter-Governmental Agreements
- Conflict of Interest – Impossibility Clause, we haven't seen the statutory requirements to fully understand how it applies to the RFGA process – we presume it applies just as it did for the Funding Plan approval.
- Immigration & English Only – what is the update of interpretation of how we apply the laws related to grant programs.

5) Programs and Business Systems

Business Functionality

The development team launched the new www.azftf.gov website. The new website site is more aesthetically appealing and functional.

We have also finalized the Quality First! Environmental Rating Scales to be used in assessing Quality First! centers and homes.

The Quality First Application has been completed; the application will be available to the public FTF website by January 13th. Initial design of the Quality First! public webpage has been completed and the site will house an overview of Quality First!, eligibility for participation, instructions, and the Quality First! application.

Initial development on the FTF Extranet (login required) has been completed. This area will be used by Quality First participants and users, as well as FTF grantees. The initial extranet development built to date displays a page where Quality First! users will be able to select a center or home from a list of Quality First! participants and input assessment scores and submit to FTF.

Data Warehouse

All historical data sets from the National Health and Education Statistics were added to the data warehouse. Sets of micro data from the American Community Survey were added to the data warehouse and the logical architecture for the data warehouse was completed.

Administration

We are currently working with the new Accounting Manager to select accounting software. A planned contract developer will join us in January to work with the Accounting Manager to configure the software. Our goal is to have the accounting system developed by July 1, 2008 so that we can have the FY 2010 budget loaded.

6) Revenues and Expenditures

Current Budget Status

We continue to expend under our budget. December expenses were \$1,626,030 compared to a budget of \$1,705,875. Year-to-date expenditures of \$7,357,660 are under budget by \$1,425,942. We have had to divert some of our processing systems development resources to concentrate more on Quality First implementation. The information technology needs for Quality First turned out to be much greater than earlier estimated as the design and implementation requirements became clearer. We also rejected off the shelf software that, with needed modifications and on-going expense, would have been more than double the cost of developing the system internally. This change will affect the delivery of our grants processing and monitoring system. While critical elements will be available as needed to handle the grants, the total system will not be complete until March of 2010. Savings from this year's administrative budget will be used to pay for the added costs of Quality First rather than using program funds.

Revenues from tax receipts for December totaled \$13.6 million, which brings the total tobacco tax revenues for the fiscal year to \$78.8 million after 6 months. In addition, interest earnings for December added another \$637,000 to the total receipts bringing the total interest earned to \$3.0 million for five months of the fiscal year (earnings from investments are always distributed the month after they are earned).